



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

## **Travels in Fiction: Baker, Stanley, Cameron and the Adventure of African Exploration**

Livingstone, J. D. (2018). Travels in Fiction: Baker, Stanley, Cameron and the Adventure of African Exploration. *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 23(1), 64-85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13555502.2017.1356586>

**Published in:**  
Journal of Victorian Culture

**Document Version:**  
Peer reviewed version

**Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:**  
[Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal](#)

**Publisher rights**  
© 2017 Oxford University Press.  
This work is made available online in accordance with the publisher's policies. Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

**General rights**  
Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Queen's University Belfast Research Portal is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Take down policy**  
The Research Portal is Queen's institutional repository that provides access to Queen's research output. Every effort has been made to ensure that content in the Research Portal does not infringe any person's rights, or applicable UK laws. If you discover content in the Research Portal that you believe breaches copyright or violates any law, please contact [openaccess@qub.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@qub.ac.uk).

## Travels in Fiction: Baker, Stanley, Cameron and the Adventure of African Exploration

At the outset of their adventure ‘on the wild east coast of Africa’, Ned Gray and his companion Tim are full of ‘high spirits’. Although they have been shipwrecked alone off Madagascar and face a perilous journey through uncharted terrain, the two adolescents are little deterred; ‘such is the elasticity of youth, and the excitement of vanquishing a difficulty, that they were for the moment thoroughly happy and free from every care’.<sup>1</sup> This vignette, valorizing boyish fortitude and promising a *rite de passage* through heroic adventure, bears the familiar hallmarks of the imperial romance genre that flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century. It might come as some surprise then to learn that the scene was written by Sir Samuel White Baker, one of nineteenth-century Britain’s most renowned explorers and the author of major expeditionary works, including *The Albert N’yanza* (1866) and *The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia* (1867). And yet Baker’s publication of *Cast up by the Sea* (1868), a book for boys, was not a singular quirk in the literary landscape of Victorian exploration; rather, it was part of a wider phenomenon – a turn to fiction – that this article investigates.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, there was a concerted tendency among the celebrated explorers of Africa to publish novels alongside the authoritative expeditionary narrative. In addition to Baker, two other explorer-authors form the basis of my discussion: the controversial Henry Morton Stanley, who explored much of the Congo and definitively settled the Nile question, and Verney Lovett Cameron, leader of the Livingstone Search expedition in the early 1870s and reportedly the first European to journey east to west across the African

---

1. Samuel W. Baker, *Cast up by the Sea* [1868] (London: J. M. Dent, 1923), p. 173. Further references to *Cast up by the Sea* will be given as parenthetical citations.

continent.<sup>2</sup> As figures associated with central and east Africa's most important geographical questions, and with political developments in the run up to the partition of Africa, their shared decision to write fictional narratives deserves attention as an important feature of the Victorian culture of exploration.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, other familiar names of nineteenth-century African geography followed the same pattern. The geologist, naturalist and east African explorer, Joseph Thomson, wrote a two-volume novel entitled *Ulu: An African Romance* (1888),<sup>4</sup> while Paul du Chaillu, the figure at the centre of disputes about the gorilla in the 1860s, published a series of boys' books. Likewise, Sir Harry H. Johnston, a renowned explorer and the first Commissioner of British Central Africa, penned a fictional autobiography of a Sudanese slave in 1889 and a later nostalgic east African romance entitled *The Man who Did the Right Thing* (1921). And yet, in spite of the regularity with which African travellers took to fiction, existing scholarship has almost entirely neglected its occurrence. Patrick Brantlinger offers a preliminary outline, identifying fiction written by 'explorer-novelists' as 'adventure stories' that 'reinforced the myth of Africa as the

---

2. James L. Newman, *Imperial Footprints: Henry Morton Stanley's African Journeys* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2004), pp. 335–36; B. A. Riffenburgh, 'Cameron, Verney Lovett (1844–1894)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <[www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com)> [accessed 16 Jan 2017].

3. In addition to his geographical achievements, Stanley was involved in imperial expansion, working directly for King Leopold of Belgium to establish stations in the Congo and contributing to the 'opening' of Buganda. See Newman, *Imperial Footprints*, pp. 337–38. Baker is best known for exploring the 'Luta N'Zigé', which he renamed the Albert N'yanza, and for later acting as governor-general of the equatorial Nile basin on the authority of the Ottoman Empire. Earlier in his career, he developed a 'colonization scheme' in Ceylon and acquired a reputation as a big game hunter. See Thomas Paul Ofcansky, 'Baker, Sir Samuel White (1821–1893)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <[www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com)> [accessed 16 Jan 2017]. Cameron's contributions to geography were less significant, but his travels extended contemporary understanding of eastern Africa's interlacustrine region and the Congo basin. See James Casada, 'Verney Lovett Cameron: A Centenary Appreciation', *The Geographical Journal*, 141.2 (July 1975), 203–15 (pp. 209, 211).

4. Robert I. Rotberg, 'Thomson, Joseph (1858–1895)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <[www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com)> [accessed 16 Jan 2017].

“dark continent”, but a sustained analysis of the works and their particular significance is yet to appear.<sup>5</sup>

This article aims to redress that neglect. Focusing on Baker’s *Cast up by the Sea*, Stanley’s *My Kalulu, Prince, King, and Slave: A Story of Central Africa* (1873), and Cameron’s *Jack Hooper: His Adventures at Sea and in South Africa* (1886), it offers the first substantial examination of what I call the ‘fiction of exploration’.<sup>6</sup> This genre was a distinctive product of its historical moment. As I argue below, it emerged with the rapid expansion of popular literature in the second half of the nineteenth century and should be understood in terms of the period’s developing celebrity culture, which explorers sought to navigate. The following discussion also assesses the relationship between explorer fiction, Victorian adventure writing, and the expeditionary narrative. For contemporary readers, these novels seem to have occupied an unusual position as both adventure romance and reliable report; their reception was bound up with their authors’ status as major travellers who had contributed to geographical knowledge. Indeed, the explorer novel was undoubtedly connected intimately with the experience of the field. A pivotal argument here is that it was a means of engagement with expeditionary travel, a literary form that offered an alternative to the authoritative travelogue. In fiction, explorers not only found a means of mediating the practical considerations of African transit to would-be discoverers, but a narrative mode by which they could revisit, reimagine, and mythologize exploration. This article, moreover, situates the corpus of expeditionary fiction in the developing imperial context in

---

5. Patrick Brantlinger, ‘Race and the Victorian Novel’, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Deirdre David, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 129–47 (p. 137); Patrick Brantlinger, ‘The Nineteenth-Century Novel and Empire’, in *The Columbia History of the British Novel*, ed. by John Richetti (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 560–78 (p. 573). See also Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 189–91.

6. Henry M. Stanley, *My Kalulu: Prince, King, and Slave: A Story of Central Africa* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1873); Verney Lovett Cameron, *Jack Hooper: His Adventures at Sea and in South Africa* [1886] (London: T. Nelson, 1887). Further references to *My Kalulu*, and *Jack Hooper* will be given as parenthetical citations.

which it was produced. Reading *Cast up by the Sea*, *My Kalulu* and *Jack Hooper* as literary maps, I dissect the ways in which their politicized geographical visions were designed to promote greater European intervention in Africa.

## **I. African Exploration and the Turn to Fiction**

In examining the turn to fiction, this article extends research on expeditionary literary culture, an emerging theme in recent studies of exploration. Brantlinger was among the first to address the publications of European travellers in Africa not as authoritative sources of geographical and ethnographic information, but as culture-bound and myth-making documents.<sup>7</sup> Tim Youngs, while arguing for a more differentiated vision than the ‘dark continent’ mythos that Brantlinger detected, developed the critical examination of explorers’ representative practices. Reading these texts in the domestic context of scientific, technological and class developments, he made the contentious suggestion that what these ‘travellers describe in Africa is mainly Britain’.<sup>8</sup> With the development of travel writing studies, published expeditionary narratives have been regularly scrutinized – primarily for their participation in colonial discourses, and for shaping European notions about distant peoples, cultures and environments. More recently, however, scholarship has sought to go beyond the authoritative text that was presented to eager readers. Following what Withers and Keighren describe as a ‘materialist turn’, scholars are now examining the ways in which travel texts themselves were shaped, often as much by the editorial intervention of publishers as by authorial revision.<sup>9</sup> Scrutinizing archival material, such as original manuscripts, proof corrections and publishing correspondence, they focus on the mediations and negotiations

---

7. Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, pp. 179–83.

8. Tim Youngs, *Travellers in Africa: British Travelogues, 1850–1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 8.

9. Charles W.J. Withers and Innes M. Keighren, ‘Travels into Print: Authoring, Editing and Narratives of Travel and Exploration c.1815–1857’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 36.4 (October 2011), 560–73 (p. 562).

involved in preparing the authorized work of travel.<sup>10</sup> This ‘materialist hermeneutic’ has also involved returning to what Roy Bridges describes as exploration’s ‘raw record’, such as field notes, diaries and other in-transit writings.<sup>11</sup> While the relative reliability of first impressions and later processed reflections remains an open question, it is undoubtedly the case that attending to first-phase writing foregrounds the complexity of the record that explorers bequeathed to posterity. As Adrian Wisnicki stresses, it is important to develop a ‘multi-layered’ approach to the ‘narrative production’ of exploration.<sup>12</sup>

By returning to primary records this work has expanded our notion of the literature of exploration well beyond the final expeditionary narrative on which many critics have focused attention. Other research has had a similar outcome, not by addressing original records but instead by turning to the alternative print mediums that sustained the culture of exploration. As Felix Driver observes, scholarship is increasingly appreciating the ‘sheer density’ of a discourse that included official communications to government offices, papers presented to scholarly

---

10. For examination of the mediating influence of the publishing industry on narratives of exploration, see Bill Bell, ‘Authors in an Industrial Economy: The Case of John Murray’s Travel Writers’, *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840*, 21 (Winter 2013) <[http://www.romtext.org.uk/articles/rt21\\_n01/](http://www.romtext.org.uk/articles/rt21_n01/)> [accessed 16 Jan 2017]; David Finkelstein, ‘Unraveling Speke: The Unknown Revision of an African Exploration Classic’, *History in Africa*, 30 (January 2003), 117–32; Justin Livingstone, ‘The Meaning and Making of *Missionary Travels*: The Sedentary and Itinerant Discourses of a Victorian Bestseller’, *Studies in Travel Writing*, 15.3 (September 2011), 267–92; Innes M. Keighren, Charles W. J. Withers and Bill Bell, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773–1859* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015); I. S. Maclaren, ‘Explorers’ and Travelers’ Narratives: A Peregrination through Different Editions’, *History in Africa*, 30 (January 2003), 213–22.

11. Withers and Keighren, ‘Travels into Print’, p. 560; Roy Bridges, ‘Explorers’ Texts and the Problems of Reactions by Non-Literate Peoples: Some Nineteenth-Century East African Examples’, *Studies in Travel Writing*, 2.1 (February 1998), 65–84 (p. 72).

12. Adrian S. Wisnicki, ‘Rewriting Agency: Samuel Baker, Bunyoro-Kitara and the Egyptian Slave Trade’, *Studies in Travel Writing*, 14.1 (February 2010), 1–27 (p. 1).

societies, and reports published in the periodical press.<sup>13</sup> To this, moreover, he adds the numerous popular editions, abridgements, translations and piracies of travel texts that circulated in the literary marketplace. Examining the dissemination of geographical knowledge, to follow Louise Henderson, entails taking account of the range of formats in which geographical ‘discoveries’ were ‘packaged’ to cater for diverse readers.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Clare Pettitt makes the case that ‘new print culture forms’ were actually integral to the ‘representation of travel and exploration’ in the nineteenth century. Particularly, she identifies the ‘burgeoning news media’, attracted to adventure and exoticism, which allowed explorers to become “‘events” to be consumed’.<sup>15</sup>

The explorer novel belongs in this enlarged conception of the literature of exploration. It might be objected that insisting on the separate categorization of such texts erects an arbitrary boundary with explorers’ travelogues, which – as has regularly been observed – should not be interpreted as simply transparent ‘nonfictional’ documents. In travel literature, the ambiguous boundary between fact and fiction is arguably thrown into particularly sharp relief.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, an explicit turn to avowedly fictional forms is clearly of significance, providing

---

13. Felix Driver, ‘Missionary Travels: Livingstone, Africa and the Book’, in *Livingstone Studies: Bicentenary Essays*, ed. by Justin D. Livingstone, spec. issue of *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 129.3–4 (September 2013), 164–78 (p. 166).

14. Louise C. Henderson, ‘David Livingstone’s *Missionary Travels* in Britain and America: Exploring the Wider Circulation of a Victorian Travel Narrative’, in *Livingstone Studies: Bicentenary Essays*, ed. by Justin D. Livingstone, spec. issue of *Scottish Geographical Journal* 129.3–4 (September 2013), 179–93 (p. 180)

15. Clare Pettitt, ‘Exploration in Print: From the Miscellany to the Newspaper’, in *Reinterpreting Exploration: The West in the World*, ed. by Dane Kennedy (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 80–108 (pp. 81, 83).

16. For discussion of the ‘elusive’ boundary between fact and fiction in travel writing, see Steve Clark, ‘Introduction’, in *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*, ed. by Steve Clark (London and New York, NY: Zed Books, 1999), pp.1–28 (p. 2). See also Jan Borm, ‘Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology’, in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, ed. by Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 13–26.

explorers with possibilities that diverged from the expeditionary narrative and exploration's other modes of literary production.

On the most basic level, fiction enabled explorers to reach new audiences. The novels of Stanley, Baker and Cameron are – on the surface at least – designed for juvenile readers. Baker claimed to be motivated by the boys who had written to him in ‘youthful enthusiasm’, expressing ‘boyish admiration’ for his African journeys (*Cast*, p. xvii). To some extent, the books are concerned with disseminating geography in an accessible form to a younger generation. As Stanley put it, *My Kalulu* was designed for readers who required ‘something lighter’ than his ‘bulky’ book of travels. Nevertheless, he assured his readers, ‘The geography here described is correct’ as was the ethnographic information about the ‘customs of the peoples around Lake Tanganyika’ (*Kalulu*, pp. vi–vii). Likewise, Cameron sought to provide information about British ‘possessions in South Africa’ that he hoped would inspire the ‘boys of Britain’ to take up their ‘duties and responsibilities’ (*Jack*, pp. vii–viii). However, although educating and shaping a juvenile audience was doubtless one of the explorers’ objectives, it is important to point out that there was no hermetic seal on the readership of so-called boys’ books. If they were read by boys, the evidence suggests that they were also read by girls.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the age profile of prospective readers was by no means fixed. Juvenile and adult audiences were not entirely distinct, particularly when it came to adventure fiction; in the later part of the nineteenth century, moreover, adventure stories were increasingly directed towards ‘a male audience whose age was explicitly blurred’.<sup>18</sup> The fiction of exploration was consciously aimed at this porous readership and took advantage of the fluid boundary between men and boys. Baker, for instance, dedicated his book to boys ‘from eight years old to eighty’ (*Cast*, p. xvii), while Stanley envisaged readers including ‘young, middle-aged, and old men’ (*Kalulu*, p. vii).

---

17. Pettitt, ‘Exploration in Print’, p. 85.

18. Bradley Deane, ‘Imperial Boyhood: Piracy and the Play Ethic’, *Victorian Studies* 53.4 (July 2011), 689–714 (p. 689).



By pursuing a juvenile reading base and a wider popular audience, the explorer-novelists were, I would suggest, engaged in cultivating their own considerable celebrity. The second half of the nineteenth century was, as Pettitt argues, the period in which a ‘modern category of “celebrity”’ came into being.<sup>19</sup> Although the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries presented considerable scope for heroic reputations – not least for imperial and military heroes like Cook, Nelson, and Wellington – from the mid-1800s there were wider possibilities for fame as a result of a growing reading public, brought about by higher literacy rates and an increasingly dynamic print culture. Indeed, the ‘media revolution’ of the period, with its accelerated printing techniques and its ‘innovations in transport and communications’, contributed to the expansion of a cheap and popular press.<sup>20</sup> The wider dissemination of newspapers, now often containing illustrative material, alongside new journalistic practices designed to increase sales, such as sensational headlines and exclusive reports, provided the conditions of transmission and consumption that were crucial in achieving widespread publicity.

Explorers of Africa were among the first to avail of these new mechanisms and gain celebrity status; their compelling stories of activities in exotic settings provided attractive material for journalists and editors.<sup>21</sup> Many, moreover, participated willingly in constructing their own reputations, setting out to appeal to powerful interest groups, and taking advantage of the

---

19. Pettitt, ‘Exploration in Print’, p. 86.

20. Max Jones, Berny Sèbe, John Strachan, Bertrand Taithe and Peter Yeandle, ‘Decolonising Imperial Heroes: Britain and France’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42.5 (December 2014), 787–825 (p. 793).

21. The study of the manifold interactions between celebrity and colonialism is an emerging area of scholarship. In the first volume devoted to the subject, Robert Clarke argues that European colonialism ‘provided contexts and opportunities ... by which individuals could achieve fame’. This article follows his contention that ‘celebrity is not inherent to any given individual or group of individuals’, but rather is ‘produced through discourse, maintained through media institutions and audience reception’. See Robert Clarke, ‘The Idea of Celebrity Colonialism: An Introduction’, in *Celebrity Colonialism: Fame, Power and Representation in Colonial and Postcolonial Cultures*, ed. by Robert Clarke (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), pp. 1–12 (pp. 1–2, 5).

newspaper by circulating letters, reports, and even telegraphing dispatches from the field.<sup>22</sup> The turn to fiction should be read in this context, as a promotional device that might serve to heighten explorers' public visibility and popularity. It marked an effort to capitalize on the period's burgeoning print media, to intervene in popular culture and extend access to emerging markets of readers.

That the novels formed part of a publicity machine becomes clearer on examining the circumstances of their publication. Explorers were not the only parties invested in their celebrity; rather, it was partly engineered by publishers who had much to gain by heightening their authors' popular standing. In fact, the records available for Baker's *Cast up by the Sea* and Stanley's *My Kalulu* suggest that they were a major driving force behind these books.<sup>23</sup> In December 1867, Baker's publisher, Alexander Macmillan, wrote to him asking if he had given any further thought to 'a book for the boys'. While it is not clear with whom the idea originated, Macmillan was clearly taken with the prospect: 'How you would charm them?', he encouraged Baker.<sup>24</sup> Two

---

22. Dane Kennedy devotes a chapter to explorers as 'celebrities' in his recent volume. See Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 232–60. It is worth noting, however, that some explorers, notably David Livingstone, achieved wider heroic stature than can be accounted for in terms of celebrity. Such individuals were monumentalized as exemplary figures of national and moral significance, and were endowed with political value that often had utility in the service of empire. Jones et al. identify the explorer as one of the major categories of 'imperial hero' in the period 1850–1914. See 'Decolonising Imperial Heroes', p. 798. See also Justin D. Livingstone, *Livingstone's 'Lives': A Metabiography of a Victorian Icon* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); and Berny Sèbe, *Heroic Imperialists in Africa: The Promotion of British and French Colonial Heroes, 1870–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

23. Publishers could act as what Sèbe calls 'hero-makers', who exerted a powerful influence in shaping public reputations and had vested interests in promoting them. See his discussion of the Kitchener legend in chapter seven of *Heroic Imperialists in Africa*.

24. British Library, London, Macmillan Archive, U. Letter Books, Add MS 55387 (2), Macmillan to Baker, 8 December 1867, p.740. The writing in Macmillan's letter books has faded over time, so the legibility of much of the correspondence is limited.

months later, he took up the matter again. With Baker's second major African work, *The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia* (1867), having recently been released, he prompted his author towards the new scheme, asking 'How about the Boys book?'<sup>25</sup> When Baker finally did send Macmillan the first portions of his 'bright & vigorous' manuscript in mid-August, he quickly went to work, keen to get the book out in time for the Christmas lists.<sup>26</sup> For Macmillan, timing was everything; he aimed to publish in a narrow window, after the hype of the 1868 general election and in the 'pause before Christmas'.<sup>27</sup> With a looming deadline, he occasionally urged Baker to work with some haste, reminding him in October that he had not yet sent orders to Clay, the printer, to 'print off' material for review and that he had still 'not returned proofs'.<sup>28</sup> If *Cast up by the Sea* was a strategy to extend Baker's popular reputation, the initiative certainly did not lie with him alone.

The same pattern emerges in correspondence from Stanley's publisher, Sampson Low, Marston. While it is again unclear if the proposal for *My Kalulu* originated with Stanley or Marston, it is evident that the press had strong ideas about how the book should take shape. In the letter enclosing the agreement for publication, Stanley was directed to write a 'story pure and simple' bearing a 'semblance of reality'. Although the book was to carry the name of a young slave who was presented to Stanley in Unyanyembe, he was told that his 'young readers must not be held to suppose that the book contains actually and truly the life of your own little boy'.<sup>29</sup> To some extent at least, the publisher was responsible for urging the formal choice of narrative

---

25. British Library, London, Macmillan Archive, U. Letter Books, Add MS 55388 (1), Macmillan to Baker, 12 February 1868, p.6.

26. British Library, London, Macmillan Archive, U. Letter Books, Add MS 55388 (2), Macmillan to Baker, 12 August 1868, p.663.

27. British Library, London, Macmillan Archive, U. Letter Books, Add MS 55388 (2), Macmillan to Baker, 5 November 1868, p. 907.

28. British Library, London, Macmillan Archive, U. Letter Books, Add MS 55388 (2), Macmillan to Baker, 1 October 1868, p. 794.

29. Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, H. M. Stanley Archives, 1505, Marston to Stanley, 1 May 1873.

fiction. Certainly, personal letters from Edward Marston display an enthusiasm for the project and an effort to keep up Stanley's momentum. Two months after the preliminary arrangements, Marston wrote to say that he hoped current political events in Spain, where Stanley was covering the civil war for the *New York Herald*, would not distract him from the novel. 'I hope the recent outbreak and fights with the Carlists will not disturb your plan of writing the book right off'.<sup>30</sup> When Marston received an unclear telegram from Stanley several weeks later, which he took to say 'Kalulu falls through', he expressed his disappointment and was relieved when the manuscript arrived on his desk at the start of September.<sup>31</sup>

When it came to the literary market, Marston was a real strategist. In 1890, following Stanley's Emin Pasha relief expedition, he went to considerable lengths to engineer the release of *In Darkest Africa* (1890) into a major publishing event. Aware of the imperative of rapid publication, he even travelled to Cairo, where Stanley was writing, in order to collect the first portions of the manuscript in person. As well as pressing Stanley to produce 'more copy!', he established international agreements and translations that ensured the book would be published simultaneously in twelve languages in June 1890.<sup>32</sup> *My Kalulu* was much less of a success and sensation than *In Darkest Africa*, but it was similarly subject to Marston's strategic considerations.

---

30. Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, H. M. Stanley Archives, 1507, Marston to Stanley, 21 July 1873.

Stanley was in Spain for several months during the Third Carlist War (1872–76). Carlism was an 'antimodernist protest movement of rural and small-town Catholic Spain against economic modernization and cultural change', which had its origins in a succession quarrel between King Fernando VII and his brother. It was at its peak from the 1830s to 1870s, but remained influential until the 1930s. See Angel Smith, *Historical Dictionary of Spain*, 2nd edn (Plymouth: Scarecrow, 2009), pp. 131–34.

31. Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, H. M. Stanley Archives, 1508, Marston to Stanley, 14 Aug. 1873.

The 'curious telegram' read 'KALULU VALETHROUGH', by which Stanley presumably meant 'half through'.

32. Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, H. M. Stanley Archives, 1604, Marston to Stanley, 14 Mar. 1890; Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), p. 150.

When Marston told Stanley in May 1873 that ‘I hope you will be able to write the Kalulu book’, he cautioned him that ‘After next season I should fear it would not do as well’.<sup>33</sup> Stanley’s first travelogue, *How I Found Livingstone* (1872), had been published to a combination of criticism and acclaim in the previous year. As has been well documented, it provoked considerable controversy, not least for the sensational journalistic prose style that it brought to bear on a narrative of geographical exploration.<sup>34</sup> In urging Stanley to produce his boys’ story in time for the forthcoming season, Marston was clearly trying to capitalize on the stir created by the mixed reception of *How I Found Livingstone*; while Stanley was in the public eye, for better or worse, a book for boys might prove a means of perpetuating public interest and extending his contentious celebrity.

The fiction of exploration was at least a vehicle of authorial ambition and publisher’s strategy, but it also had greater significance. Indeed, the novels cast light on the relationship between explorers’ travelogues and the imperial adventure fiction that flourished towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is recognized that, from the 1860s, the literature of African exploration fuelled the adventure story, providing source material that would take it into new territory both metaphorically and literally.<sup>35</sup> To give just one example, in *Black Ivory* (1873) – an African adventure by the prolific boy’s author, R. M. Ballantyne – the works of David Livingstone serve as intertexts that underpin the supposedly authoritative information about east Africa and the slave trade that the novel offers.<sup>36</sup> The fact that explorers did not just provide inspiration, however, but turned to fiction themselves both supports and extends the proposed

---

33. Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, H. M. Stanley Archives, 1506, Marston to Stanley, 21 May 1873.

34. See Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 117–45; and Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, pp. 22–48.

35. Brantlinger, ‘Nineteenth-Century’, p. 573.

36. There are numerous references to Livingstone in Ballantyne’s *Black Ivory* (New York, Thomas Nelson, 1873). See pp. iii, 65, 134 and 371.

relationship between expeditionary literature and adventure texts. Andrea White has suggested that the association between ‘travel narrative’ and ‘adventure fiction’ endowed the latter with a heightened ‘credibility and respectability’ that granted it ‘influential power’ in shaping attitudes over generations towards the regions and races that appeared in its pages.<sup>37</sup> Without wishing to overplay the formative influence that the fiction of exploration had on the late-Victorian adventure genre, the interventions of explorer novelists surely contributed to its cultural weight. Reviews of Cameron’s *Jack Hooper*, for instance, drew attention to its author’s status as an authority on Africa. As the *Athenaeum* put it, ‘no one can be more qualified to write’ a ‘tale of South Africa’ than ‘Commander Cameron’.<sup>38</sup> *The Pall Mall Gazette* likewise reminded readers that ‘Cameron was the first European who succeeded in crossing tropical Africa from east to west’; his experience in the field made him ‘well fitted to tell such a story as this’.<sup>39</sup> Comments on *Cast up by the Sea* similarly made much of its author’s experience and credentials. As the *Dundee Courier* put it in enthusiastic terms: ‘His own personal adventures in strange African and Asiatic countries, his thorough knowledge of geographical questions, his pleasing and vivid powers of description, and the high respect in which he is held by the learned and scientific, caused us to take up this attractive volume with high expectations, and we have not been disappointed’.<sup>40</sup> In the same spirit, the *Saturday Review* suggested that horizons gained by ‘Exploration and travel in its most varied forms’ had allowed Baker to impart ‘a degree of reality ... to the creations of his fancy which could hardly be expected in the mere conceptions of gentlemen who stay at home’. This particularly showed itself in the portions of the book dealing ‘with savage life’ where

---

37. Andrea White, *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition: Constructing and Deconstructing the Imperial Subject* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 44.

38. ‘Christmas Books’, *Athenaeum*, 4 December 1886, p. 742.

39. ‘Books of Adventure for Boys’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 November 1886, p. 6.

40. ‘*Cast up by the Sea; or, The Adventures of Ned Grey*’, *Dundee Courier*, 4 January 1869, p. 4.

Baker's 'special knowledge of Africans and their ways stands him in good stead'.<sup>41</sup> Some reviews of Stanley's novel displayed suspicions about his reliability, of the sort that had abounded in Britain when he first claimed to have 'found' Livingstone. A sneering report in *The Academy* told readers that if they had doubts about 'the proportion of fact and fiction' in *How I Found Livingstone*, they should 'at some personal sacrifice read *My Kalulu*' where they would learn 'what Mr. Stanley's imagination can really do'.<sup>42</sup> Yet although Stanley was caught up in debates about 'sensational geography', other readers zoned in again on the significance of his record in the field. The book's value, wrote one reviewer, was enhanced by being 'based upon actual realities experienced by the great explorer', while another argued that he 'has the advantage over most romanticists, who take their heroes into African wonderland; he has seen the places he speaks about for himself'.<sup>43</sup> For the *Morning Post*, readers had the 'substantial satisfaction of knowing that the narrative is true in all those matters in which the ethnologist or geographer takes an interest'.<sup>44</sup>

The reception of these novels was intimately bound up with the identity of their authors as acclaimed geographical travellers who had been tested by the scientific establishment and the terrain through which they had journeyed. To some extent they were what we might call interstitial texts, occupying a space between adventurous romance and authoritative travel narrative. While the novels were regularly described as 'sensational', 'spirited', 'thrilling', not least for their illustrations, the *Piccadilly Papers* could mention *Cast up by the Sea* in and amongst nonfictional travelogues, endorsing it as 'perhaps as creditable as many travels'.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, the

---

41. 'Cast up by the Sea', *Saturday Review*, 30 January 1869, pp. 156–57.

42. 'Miscellaneous Literature', *Academy*, 31 January 1874, p.114.

43. 'Literature', *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 13 December 1873, p. 6; 'Books of the Season', *Bradford Observer*, 6 December 1873, p. 6.

44. 'My Kalulu: Prince, King, and Slave', *Morning Post*, 4 December 1873, p. 3.

45. 'American and Other Travel', *Piccadilly Papers: By a Peripatetic*, February 1869, 171–82 (p. 177).

*Morning Post* suggested that the blend of ‘fact and fiction’ in *My Kalulu* was actually no greater than may ‘be found in many books of travel’.<sup>46</sup> When Cameron’s novels – *Jack Hooper*, *In Savage Africa* (1887) and *Among the Turks* (1888) – were advertised together in *The Times* in 1888 it is notable they were categorized as ‘Books of Travel and Adventure’ rather than ‘Books for Boys’.<sup>47</sup> Instead of being listed with novels by W.H.G. Kingston and R.M. Ballantyne, they took their place alongside serious works including Elisha Kent Kane’s *Arctic Explorations* (1856). Such slippage in categorization underscores the unusual status of the explorer-novel as both romantic adventure and credible witness; they were received as imaginative works that were particularly grounded in their authors’ material experience in the field. While other adventure writers could likewise claim legitimacy on the basis of having been ‘on the spot’, the explorers had unique standing as authorities who had contributed directly to geographical knowledge. The distinctive status of the explorer-fiction, I would suggest, marks an intervention in the adventure genre that consolidated its connection with the expeditionary narrative and with the authority of scientific exploration.

## II. Reimagining Exploration: Teaching Lessons, Making Myths

The explorer-novel was certainly a contribution to adventure writing, but as part of expeditionary literary culture it should also be read as a mode of engagement with exploration itself. In each of the three novels discussed here, African travel forms a central theme. In Cameron’s *Jack Hooper*, the youthful protagonist runs away from his vicious uncle and takes to the sea in a makeshift boat before being picked up by the *Idalia*, a ship owned by the wealthy Mr Penton who is bound for South Africa. On arriving at the Cape of Good Hope, Penton’s party sets out on a hunting expedition that initially takes them across the Zwarte Berge and then over the Karroo plains, across the Nieuwveld Mountains to the Orange River. Penton makes plans to

---

46. ‘My Kalulu’, p. 3.

47. ‘Books of Travel and Adventure’, *The Times*, 13 December 1888, p. 12.



explore further north beyond the river before ‘turning east or west’ to ‘make [his] way to the coast’, but his more ambitious scheme is ultimately foiled by an armed collision with a Boer militia (*Jack*, p. 295). In Baker’s *Cast up by the Sea*, the protagonist Ned Grey has been brought up on the Cornish coast as the adopted son of a sailor and smuggler. Compelled by a press gang to join the British navy, he is shipwrecked off the east coast of Africa where he is detained for the next few years first as a slave and later as a tribal chief, before eventually embarking on an ambitious expedition to Zanzibar in order to return to Britain. Unlike both these novels, *My Kalulu* is devoid of European characters. Instead the protagonist is a Zanzibari youth named Selim, who travels into central Africa with an Arab trading caravan directed by his father, Sheikh Amer. When the party is routed in a conflict with the Warori tribe, the novel follows Selim’s time as a captive of the slave trade, his exploits with the young Watuta prince, Kalulu, and his eventual return to Zanzibar.

In the first of these novels, Cameron constructs a plot that allows him to disseminate information about the arrangements and practices of expeditionary travel. Through the young Jack Hooper, the protagonist and narrator, Cameron provides insight into the preparations of a well-stocked caravan featuring a considerable team of travellers, guides, servants and animals. Jack details the equipping of wagons – describing how they are ‘fitted with boxes and lockers’ for ‘provisions and ammunition’, ‘covered with a high canvas tilt’ to protect against the elements, and ‘drawn by a “span” of bullocks – and offers an inventory of the supplies that the party takes with them to last a period of months (*Jack*, pp. 61–63). Indeed, Cameron’s novel provides ‘how-to’ details of the sort supplied in exploration manuals, such as the Royal Geographical Society’s *Hints to Travellers* (first edition, 1854). Hooper’s descriptions of wagon life, for instance, serve to illustrate recommended practice in establishing, arranging and fortifying camps (p. 122). To some extent, moreover, the novel also tracks the development of two nascent explorers. Before running away to sea, Jack already has potential as an African traveller having learned the ‘elements of navigation’ and received the ‘rudiments of a sound commercial education’ (p. 16).

Later, when he falls into company with Mr Penton, his new mentor continues his education by providing him with further instruction in ‘the ordinary rules of navigation’ (p. 58). While in South Africa, of course, Jack and his companion Harry Tregear get hands-on expeditionary training. They receive lessons in ‘roughing it’, learning how to replace worn out boots with ‘veldtshoen’ and how to repair a gun with a piece of ‘raw hide’, and a promise from Dr Maclean to develop them into ‘decent naturalists’ (pp. 136, 87–88, 323).<sup>48</sup> Ultimately, we don’t see the boys return to Africa after their first South African venture. At the end of the novel they have become ‘officers in the merchant service’ and ‘masters of fine ships’ (p. 348). But as naval men, like Cameron himself, they are now fully equipped for the sort of major expedition that Penton envisages but never undertakes.

In working expeditionary rubric into narrative fiction, Cameron’s *Jack Hooper* can be read as means of mediating the practices of African travel. Indeed, if the book is a lesson in geography it is equally a lesson in the culture of exploration. Baker’s *Cast up by the Sea* performs a similar function, in likewise charting the progress of an incipient traveller. As the son of a sailor who is enlisted in the navy, Ned Grey has a firm grounding in the skills of navigation, which will be crucial to his survival in east Africa. When he is shipwrecked off Madagascar, he is fortunately equipped with the essential toolkit of African travel. On recovering a chest from the wreckage, Ned is supplied with ‘a brace of beautiful pistols ... a telescope, sextant, and compass’, ‘A small bottle of mercury and trough for an artificial horizon’, the *Nautical Almanac*, charts of the Indian ocean and east coast of Africa, along with ‘drawing and writing materials’ (*Cast*, pp. 175–76). Armed with this equipment and the requisite knowledge to use it, he is able to plot his initial position and keep track of his subsequent route. Although Ned spends as much time as a resident as a traveller, since he is forcibly detained by various tribes, Baker shows Ned behaving

---

48. Galton includes a passage from Gordon Cumming, in which he identifies “veldtschoens,” or home-made shoes’ as elements of a ‘*Complete Bush-costume*’. See Francis Galton, *The Art of Travel; or, Shifts and Contrivances Available in Wild Countries*, 4th edn (London: John Murray, 1867), p. 119.

like a proto-explorer. Read alongside Galton's *Art of Travel* (first edition, 1855), a handbook designed to offer preparatory information for would-be travellers, it is clear that Ned implements much of the guidance considered indispensable for successful exploration. For instance, when Ned and his companion – the freed slave, Tim – are first stranded, they improvise a 'buoyant raft' out of water casks and planks reminiscent of Galton's instructions for the construction of 'rude boats' (p. 171). When the boys need to start a fire in the absence of traditional tinder, they use a variation on what Galton describes as the 'flint-and-steel gun' method, bruising a 'teaspoonful of gunpowder' in order to ignite a sailcloth with 'an unloaded musket' (p.177).<sup>49</sup> Ned also provides something of a model in contact with local peoples, resolving from the start 'that it was of the first importance that they should establish amicable relations with the natives' (p. 187). Broadly speaking, he follows Galton's advice on the 'Management of Savages', where he commends 'A frank, joking, but determined manner' combined with 'common sense, truth and uprightness'. When Ned first sets out for Zanzibar, moreover, he makes his preparations with care and precision, taking considerations of the sort Galton considered basic to 'rude travel'.<sup>50</sup> Evaluating the requirements of the expedition and preparing his outfit accordingly, he calculates that he and Tim are capable of carrying forty pounds each while his dog could take an additional twelve. With his 'ninety-two pounds' weight of supplies', he recognizes that 'Great management would be necessary in the arrangement of the luggage', and takes precautions such as splitting his gunpowder between tarpaulin bags made watertight with India-rubber (pp. 197–98).

Yet, although *Cast up by the Sea* participates in popular mediation, its engagement with exploration is not limited to the role of handbook or expedition primer. Rather, the novel makes an interesting effort to frame continental exploration as a successor to maritime travel. Ned Grey's adventures notably take place in two parts, at sea and on land; his initial exploits occur on board the *Sybilie*, a frigate in the Royal Navy, before he is shipwrecked and embarks on his

---

49. Galton, *Art of Travel*, pp. 94, 173.

50. Galton, *Art of Travel*, pp. 302, 9.

extended sojourn in east Africa. The book is at once, then, naval romance and African adventure. To some extent, Baker is simply tapping into the appetite for nautical themes that characterized mid-century boys' fiction. But writing in 1868, while naval fiction was in its heyday and African adventure was on the ascent, I would argue that he seeks to shift the locus of adventure from the maritime to the terrestrial. As Dane Kennedy notes, in important respects nineteenth-century land expeditions were actually direct inheritors of 'maritime notions of space and methods of navigation'. With the aim of achieving scientific knowledge of the sort that could be 'measured, mapped, quantified', continental exploration implemented the protocols that had been honed at sea. There was, moreover, a powerful conceptual connection between ocean travel and land exploration that revealed itself in expeditionary language, as explorers of Africa adopted the metaphors of 'navigating' their course and 'charting' their route.<sup>51</sup> *Cast up by the Sea*, I would suggest, invokes this relationship between sea and land – and does so in order to present African exploits as the natural heir to ocean ventures. Ned is indebted to his time at sea; his maritime training is crucial preparation for his later experiences in east Africa. But in having the young hero transition from sailor to African traveller, the novel supplants the nautical with the terrestrial and represents Africa as a new space for navigation and adventure. In the context of the heightening public interest in east and central Africa from the 1850s, which owed much to the promotions of the Royal Geographical Society led by Roderick Murchison, the novel can be read as part of a broader effort to popularize African exploration.<sup>52</sup>

In *My Kalulu*, Stanley's engagement with exploration is quite different to the efforts of Cameron and Baker. In this novel there is no European expedition or a maturing explorer figure. Instead, the novel's caravan is made up of wealthy Zanzibari merchants on a slave-trading

---

51. Dane Kennedy, *Last Blank Spaces*, pp. 6–7, 19.

52. For discussion of Roderick Murchison's role in encouraging the exploration of Africa, see Robert A. Stafford, *Scientist of Empire: Sir Roderick Murchison, Scientific Exploration and Victorian Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 153–88.

expedition, which soon runs into trouble with local ethnic groups. In part at least, the novel is written as an exposé document, with the aim of directing moral outrage at the Indian Ocean slave trade. As Stanley wrote in his preface, 'I had in view the idea that I might be able to describe more vividly in such a book as this than in any other way the evils of the slave-trade in Africa' (*Kalulu*, p. viii). By having Selim, one of the few survivors of the battle, become a slave himself Stanley is able to imagine 'the refined cruelty of the slave-traders' from the inside (p. 150). In this book, east Africa without European influence is ultimately a place of extreme violence and one that requires remedial intervention from the outside world.

Nevertheless in basing his novel on a non-European expedition, Stanley's approach to exploration is striking. Recent research has drawn attention to the 'hidden histories' of exploration, emphasizing the contributions of indigenous peoples that made European expeditions possible. As Driver and Jones argue, they were dependent on guides and intermediaries, as well as local knowledge and cooperation.<sup>53</sup> In the case of east African travel, moreover, explorers' journeys were facilitated by a well-established 'transregional' caravan trade network that long preceded their presence.<sup>54</sup> Since traditional histories of exploration showed little concern with this pre-existent system, it is surprising that *My Kalulu* pays such attention to the Arab-Swahili caravan. At the outset of the novel, readers witness Sheikh Amer and the other traders planning the logistics of their expedition. The fundamental principle of central African travel, we learn, as they prepare their goods, is 'Nothing in excess, but enough of every necessary thing' (*Kalulu* p. 23). The narrator highlights the scale of the expedition, which is similar 'to the migration of an entire settlement'. When it departs, it is equipped with 'the vast amount of stores requisite for the consumption of a large and imposing caravan for about three years' (pp. 33, 23).

---

53. Felix Driver and Lowri Jones, *Hidden Histories of Exploration* (London: Royal Holloway, University of London, 2009), p. 5.

54. Stephen Rockel, 'Decentering Exploration in East Africa', in *Reinterpreting Exploration: The West in the World*, ed. by Dane Kennedy (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 172–94 (p. 172).

Ultimately, the novel's image of caravan culture is one of significant organization and sophistication. The expedition is carefully managed, with 'fundis, or overseers' responsible for the 'conduct of the caravan' and 'kirangozis, or guides' responsible for establishing its route (pp. 30, 68). Although Stanley could himself be a violent traveller and was accused by contemporaries for conducting 'exploration by warfare', his picture in *My Kalulu* of the Arab-African caravan shows considerable regard for the pre-established system of travel on which he and other explorers depended.<sup>55</sup>

Of course, on reading the explorer-novels it is important to recognize that their engagement with exploration is not neutral. While they may be sincere attempts to mediate the experience of travel, they are also documents that cultivate and perpetuate myths of exploration. Indeed, in representing the east African caravan system in some detail, there is no doubt that Stanley also distorts it. For instance, although the novel's two chief 'fundis' – Simba and Moto – are capable figures whose expertise in travel is to be admired, they are fundamentally cast as 'faithful' followers devoted to their masters (*Kalulu*, p. 10). As such, they are caricatures of the intermediaries on whom explorers relied in their interactions with local communities. While it has now been clearly demonstrated that such individuals contributed to the geographical enterprise, not least by providing local knowledge and by mediating between explorers and encountered groups, *My Kalulu* values the intermediaries more for their loyalty than their agency.<sup>56</sup>

Cameron's novel similarly circumscribes the role of indigenous agents. In *Jack Hooper*, it is certainly clear that the travelling party is dependent on the assistance of local guides. When in the veld, the knowledge of the Bushmen, Horoye and Mokantse, proves indispensable. Horoye's

---

55. Driver, *Geography Militant*, p. 123.

56. Donald Simpson began the process of examining the contributions of intermediaries, which had been ignored by standard histories, in *Dark Companions: The African Contribution to the European Exploration of East Africa* (London: Elek, 1975).

finely tuned tracking skills enable Jack to locate a group of Griquas with whom he is anxious to communicate, while his intimate knowledge of the environment enables him to source fluids in arid conditions; on one occasion he unearths ‘a tuber as large as a child’s head’ hidden below ground under ‘a withered looking stem’ (*Jack*, p. 256). Yet while Cameron pays tribute to the local guide, he does so within strictly defined parameters. Horoye, it emerges, is devoted to Jack and has resolved to ‘stop with [him]’ for some time (p. 226). In having a teenage boy become the Bushman’s effectual master, Cameron relies again on the motif of the faithful companion. Interactions between explorers and intermediaries were of course much less clear-cut than such an image allows. As Kennedy reminds us, their relationships could vary from ‘subservience to recalcitrance, abjection to autonomy, oppression to opportunity’.<sup>57</sup> These individuals, moreover, were motivated less by fidelity than financial reward, and in performing the crucial task of intercultural mediation possessed more power and autonomy than explorers cared to acknowledge. In *Jack Hooper*, Cameron may commend indigenous agency and reveal respect for local knowledge, but he engages in a problematic and romanticized representation that belies a more complex reality.

Baker is more crudely reductive than either Stanley or Cameron. In *Cast up by the Sea*, Ned is accompanied by a freed slave whose devotion is seemingly limitless. Although they first meet in Britain, ‘nigger Tim’ acts as an intermediary in east Africa, guiding Ned’s interactions with the groups they encounter and interpreting in regions where he speaks the language (*Cast*, p. 72). The dynamic Baker envisions is profoundly racist; Tim’s best quality is being ‘as faithful as the dog’ and his best act is to sacrifice his life on Ned’s behalf (p. 197). Indeed, diminishing the cultural mediator to subservient follower is part of the novel’s mythologisation of the nature of African travel. European travellers in sub-Saharan Africa tended to be accompanied by a substantial retinue, not least to transport the necessary goods and equipment required for

---

57. Kennedy, *Last Blank Spaces*, p. 186.

prolonged expeditions.<sup>58</sup> But in *Cast up by the Sea*, this is set to one side in favour of solo exploits by the youthful protagonist. Ned and Tim make two efforts to reach Zanzibar, and on both occasions they do so alone. Although they receive a guide to help them cross the desert, and eventually Ned joins a trading party for the final leg of his journey, for the most part the novel sidesteps the collective nature of expeditions in order to valorize individual agency. While expeditionary narratives often portrayed explorers in heroic terms, they generally described the management of their caravans and detailed its various personnel. In writing fiction, however, Baker had licence to dispense with the essential infrastructure of exploration and mythologize African travel as an individual enterprise rather than a collaborative project.

A similar pattern emerges in Baker's representation of cultural encounter. To some extent, the novel confronts an important dimension of European expeditions: the vulnerability and relative weakness of the western traveller.<sup>59</sup> Even with large-scale expeditions, as Bridges points out, the communities they encountered often 'controlled their destinies'.<sup>60</sup> Instead of having the upper hand in their many interactions, explorers generally 'had to accept situations as they found them if they wanted to proceed'.<sup>61</sup> In *Cast up by the Sea*, it is notable that Ned effectively ends up as a prisoner when resident with east African groups during his sojourn.

---

58. In the later part of the nineteenth century, the scale was only getting larger. While the more extensive and militarised expedition party is generally associated with Stanley, Baker was himself involved in this transition; in the early 1870s, while in the employ of the Ottomans, he led what was described at the time as a 'geographico-military' expedition to the equatorial Nile Basin to exert Egyptian authority. See 'Geographical Explorations and Discoveries in 1870', in *American Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1870* (New York, NY: D. Appleton, 1871), pp. 317–30 (p. 318).

59. Kennedy, *Last Blank Spaces*, p. 5.

60. Roy Bridges, 'Europeans and East Africans in the Age of Exploration', *The Geographical Journal* 139.2 (June 1973), 220–32 (p. 223).

61. Roy Bridges, 'The Historical Role of British Explorers in East Africa', *Terrae Incognitae: The Journal of the Society for the History of Discoveries* 14 (1982), 1–21 (p. 4).



When in the Great Lakes region, where he remains for several years, he thinks that ‘escape is impossible’; ‘How often would we have escaped from this hateful land if it had been practicable’ (*Cast*, pp. 277–78). In imagining his protagonist’s detention, Baker was doubtless revisiting experiences from his own journeys. In 1864, during the Nile expedition, he was detained for a series of months at Kisuna by Kamrasi, the premier of Bonyoro, who was then embroiled in internal political dispute.<sup>62</sup> As Wisnicki argues, a feature of Baker’s expedition was that the situation in which he found himself regularly escaped his control.<sup>63</sup> Yet, in *Cast up by the Sea*, the vulnerability that detention implies is largely subsumed by a fantasy of natural European superiority. Although Ned is held against his will, he quite effortlessly – and reluctantly – rises to positions of authority. Among the first group with whom he is resident, he accords such respect ‘in the estimation of the old chief’ that he is offered his daughter’s hand in marriage (pp. 193–94). Later, when captured as a slave and taken inland he quickly becomes ‘almost as great a man as the king, to whom he acted as counsellor’ and is eventually ‘much against his will, elected chief’ (pp. 235, 276). In imagining Ned’s natural ascendancy, Baker frames the arrival of Europeans in east Africa in terms that overstate its significance for local communities. Historians of east Africa note that European explorers seldom figure in oral traditions, and that they were not unique visitors to the regions through which they travelled. Prior to the late 1870s, the more significant arrivals were more likely to be other Africans, and particularly the influx of well-armed ‘Swahili and Arab traders from the coast and Zanzibar’. Consequently, ‘the encounter may not necessarily have been as important to the African involved as the explorer (and later readers) assumed it must be’.<sup>64</sup> While Baker may concede the precarious position of the explorer in *Cast up by the Sea*, he reimagines the interaction between African and European as an encounter of wonder and is at pains to endow the traveller with a unique and outsized significance.

---

62. Ofcasnky, ‘Baker’.

63. Wisnicki, ‘Rewriting Agency’, p. 18.

64. Bridges, ‘Europeans and East Africans’, p. 221; Bridges, ‘Explorers’ Texts’, pp. 67, 76.

Explorers were not always in control of the situations in which they found themselves, but there were opportunities to re-exert authority in the narratives they published on their return. On reading *The Albert N'yanza* (1866) alongside Baker's diary, for instance, Wisnicki finds evidence that he sought 'to assert his discursive mastery over a material reality' of which he was often not in command.<sup>65</sup> The archive suggests that such literary performances were encouraged by publishers, who sought to ensure that their authors would meet the expectations of the Victorian audience.<sup>66</sup> Although travelogues were crafted documents, however, I would argue that explorers found a means of imaginative control in the novel exceeding that offered by the authoritative narrative. In their official publications scientific travellers remained bound by a tacit contract to represent events as they 'really' occurred. In seeking to provide information that the scientific establishment would deem reliable, they made efforts to signal their credibility as witnesses.<sup>67</sup> The novel's relative exemption from this mandate, in contrast, enabled explorers to regulate and impose order on the experience of their journeys and intercultural encounters. While explorer fiction was a reflexive engagement with African travel, offering instruction and commentary on expeditionary practice, it was also a means of narrative control and re-imagination that ultimately served to promote some of exploration's more alluring myths.

### III. Literary Cartographies and Imperial Politics

---

65. Wisnicki, 'Rewriting Agency', p. 18.

66. Finkelstein, for instance, discusses the editing of Speke's publication. See Finkelstein, 'Unraveling Speke'.

67. Credibility and authority has become an important topic in studies of travel writing and exploration. Since travellers reported from distant parts of the globe, the reliability of their witness was, to some extent, based on trust; in their narratives, explorers signalled the credentials (both moral and scientific) on which their authority rested. See Keighren, Withers and Bell, *Travels into Print*, pp. 11–14, 68–99; and Michael Heffernan, "'A Dream as Frail as Those of Ancient Time': The In-Credible Geographies of Timbuctoo", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19.2 (April 2001), pp. 203–25.

The body of literature examined here is more than a side-project of Africa's celebrated explorers, but a complex contribution to the culture of exploration. Indeed, it is also important to recognize the political nature of Baker's, Stanley's and Cameron's novels and their participation in the late Victorian imperial imagination; with Baker writing in the late 1860s, Stanley in the 70s, and Cameron in the 80s, the works span the lead-up to and immediate aftermath of the 'scramble for Africa'. Recent work has cautioned against reducing exploration to an imperialist scoping exercise for the acquisition of territory. Exploration had no single set of goals, but instead consisted of the multiple objectives of interest groups ranging from scientific societies, to humanitarian networks, and to governmental offices.<sup>68</sup> Linear narratives, moreover, which propose a relationship of simple causation between the arrival of European explorers and later imperial expansion are increasingly being challenged by accounts that address the 'complexity of the interplay'.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, Baker, Stanley and Cameron were all involved in imperial advocacy, and although they offer no singular vision of Africa they each used their texts – including their fiction – to promote European activity in the continent. Since Martin Green's *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (1979), the claim that adventure tales were 'the energizing myth of English imperialism' has almost become a critical truism.<sup>70</sup> Yet, the broad acceptance of this assessment has arguably impeded analytical investigation of the genre. John Miller observes that the perceived correlation with 'Britain's imperial interests' has resulted in a misplaced tendency to assume the adventure romance's 'overarching simplicity', when it instead requires 'close textual analysis' and interrogation as a 'key site' of 'the strategic formations of colonial

---

68. Kennedy, *Reinterpreting Exploration*, p. 9.

69. Berny Sèbe, 'The Making of British and French Legends of Exploration, 1921–1914', in *Reinterpreting Exploration: The West in the World*, ed. by Dane Kennedy (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 109–31 (pp. 110, 112).

70. Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1979), p. 3.

discourse'.<sup>71</sup> Likewise, the fiction of exploration invites close reading for its particular contribution to the political moment and the contemporary vision of Africa. In what remains, I examine the ways in which Baker, Stanley and Cameron participated in colonial discourse by authoring politically embedded literary cartographies.<sup>72</sup>

As the works of geographical travellers, it is no surprise that the explorer-novels should be preoccupied by space. Yet these works are far from neutral representations and instead imaginatively invest geography with meaning. In *Cast up by the Sea*, Baker projects back into the past, setting the novel in the 1790s. He chooses a juncture at which interest in the scientific exploration of the African interior was mounting, but well in advance of the major expeditions that would take place from the 1850s. Writing at a time when fewer and fewer parts of the map remained 'blank spaces', Baker's return to the past enables him to capitalize on the invigorating notion of *terra incognita*, in which 'anything seems possible and adventure seems inevitable'.<sup>73</sup> But

---

71. John Miller, *Empire and the Animal Body: Violence, Identity and Ecology in Victorian Adventure Fiction* (London: Anthem Press, 2012), pp. 24–25.

72. Richard Phillips was among the first to focus on the geographical imagination of adventure writing, reading these texts as narrative maps that 'naturalise constructions of geography and identity'. See Richard Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1997), p. 14. Narratives of African exploration have also been read as imaginative textual maps. See, for instance, Adrian S. Wisicki, 'Interstitial Cartographer: David Livingstone and the Invention of South Central Africa', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37.1 (March 2009), 255–71. For a discussion of 'literary cartography' more broadly, see Robert T. Tally Jr., 'Introduction: Mapping Narratives', in *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative*, ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr. (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2014), pp. 1–11. Tally observes that interest in the relation between 'space, place, or mapping and literature' has escalated in the wake of the spatial turn (p. 3). For Tally, 'mapmaking' is a central impulse of fictional narrative; 'although certain narratives may be more ostensibly cartographic than others, all may be said to constitute forms of literary cartography' (p. 1). For an overview of 'literary geography' as an 'emergent interdisciplinary field', consisting of diverse critical perspectives, see Neal Alexander's recent position paper, 'On Literary Geography', *Literary Geographies* 1.1 (2015), pp. 3–6.

73. Phillips, *Mapping Men*, p. 3.

although place names are scarce while Ned journeys in Africa, aside from the referents of Madagascar and Zanzibar, he travels through regions that some contemporaries would have recognized. The description of an unnamed lake as a ‘vast inland sea’, for instance, would doubtless have cued informed readers to identify it as Lake Nyasa (*Cast*, p. 208). By inviting comparison between the relatively unknown east Africa of Ned’s travels and the increasingly detailed map of the late 1860s, the novel indirectly celebrates the achievements of the cartographic enterprise to which Baker had contributed.

In Baker, moreover, we also encounter a geographical trope of colonial fiction that would become particularly pervasive under the New Imperialism later in the century. In *Cast up by the Sea*, the setting serves the symbolic purpose of a testing ground for a European protagonist.<sup>74</sup> While Ned is accomplished from the very outset of the novel, Africa provides the youth with opportunity to act like a man. Indeed, *Cast up by the Sea* seems preoccupied with what Bill Schwarz calls the ‘protocols of the white man’; by having Ned assume natural leadership, proving himself in the hunt and in battle, the narrative is designed to affirm his conduct and imperial masculinity.<sup>75</sup> Crucially, in one of the pervasive tropes of imperial discourse, he resists

---

74. This use of the frontier is evident, for instance, in Buchan’s *Prester John* (London: Nelson, 1910) in which African terrain serves as a testing ground for the development of the protagonist, Davie Crawford. Similarly, confrontation with African ‘savagery’ provides opportunity for the reinvigoration of British masculinity in Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* (London: Cassell, 1885).

75. Bill Schwarz, *The White Man’s World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 254. The phenomenon of ‘imperial masculinity’ has attracted considerable attention in recent decades. Graham Dawson’s important work, for instance, locates ‘exemplary imperial masculinity ... at the heart of the British national imaginary right up to 1914’. Focusing on the emergence of the ‘soldier hero’, he explores the ways in which idealized masculinities were constructed and sustained by the popular press and a growing genre of heroic biography. See Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 83. More recently, Bradley Deane has revisited the powerful ‘cultural synthesis’ of Empire and notions of manliness, as mediated through popular fiction. Arguing that such literature offers ‘the best chance to discern broad patterns of

the compromise of his racial integrity when he refuses the advances of a beautiful ‘Amazon’ who tempts him to ‘be my chief’ (*Cast*, p. 293). The novel, moreover, specifically frames Ned’s experience in east Africa as a test by concluding his sojourn with the crossing of a ‘frightful desert’ (p. 299). Drawing on its biblical resonance as a figurative place of trial, Ned must cross the wilderness in order to re-emerge into civilized life. He is faced with ‘a distance of about a hundred and twenty miles’ where there is ‘no drop of water’; ‘the sand of the desert scorched the feet’ and ‘the poisonous breath of the Simoom, that destroying wind that seems to own a furnace as its birthplace, blew upon them’ (pp. 299, 301). As he nears the end of his crossing, Ned experiences a death and rebirth as he passes into oblivion for hours while a life-saving and ‘heaven-sent torrent! – poured like a waterspout upon the famished earth’ (p. 307). Following this resurrection and re-emergence from the wilderness, Ned receives the conventional reward of marriage to the woman he has loved since childhood and the discovery that he is an aristocrat by birth, due to inherit both title and estate. The desert is at once Ned’s point of exit from savagery and his re-entrance into civilization, and indeed the dominant symbol of his adventure-test in Africa. While Baker was certainly interested in conveying east African topography to his readers, he equally used geographical representation to stage his protagonist’s masculine formation.

At the same time, Baker constructs a broader geographical vision in *Cast up by the Sea*. The novel might be described as a cartography of violence, involved in mapping Africa between the east coast and the Great Lakes as unstable and war-torn regions. In *Cast up by the Sea*, violence is an essential feature of the continent; the narrator asserts that ‘the whole of Central Africa is composed of separate tribes who are constantly at war with each other’ (*Cast*, p. 48). Indeed, it is not long after his arrival before Ned encounters the inland slave trade. Setting out for Zanzibar after some weeks’ residence on the coast, he soon finds himself overpowered and

---

cultural assumptions’, he investigates the displacement of mid-century ideals by a new hegemonic masculinity constituted under the New Imperialism. See Bradley Deane, *Masculinity and the New Imperialism: Rewriting Manhood in British Popular Literature, 1870–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 1, 18.

taken captive by ‘a gang of slave-hunters’. As the traders take Ned away from his intended destination and towards the interior, he journeys further into the heartlands of the ‘accursed traffic!’ (pp. 201–202). In the novel, the ‘inland sea’ of Lake Nyasa is an epicentre of the trade; when Ned arrives there he realizes that he has reached ‘a place of great importance’ and that ‘if he were to become a slave, this spot would most probably be the scene of his captivity’ (p. 209). The villages around the lake are militarized and ‘strongly protected by stockades’; the entrance to the principal town is surrounded by ‘sharp-pointed boughs of extremely hard wood’ in order ‘to prevent a sudden surprise by a rush of men’ (pp. 208–209). The local king, moreover, is a supplier who thinks nothing of ordering ‘that a certain refractory village in the neighbourhood should be pillaged, and the inhabitants sold as slaves’ (p. 216).

Prior to the 1860s, the British public had little awareness of the extent of the Indian Ocean slave trade in east Africa. David Livingstone’s expeditions around Lake Nyasa in the early 1860s, and his emotive reporting, brought it to the attention of humanitarian interests and helped inspire a resurgence of abolitionist sentiment.<sup>76</sup> Writing at the end of the decade, Baker’s depiction of the horrors of slavery was thus part of a developing consciousness of the east African trade. *Cast up by the Sea* was written as a contribution to abolitionist discourse, a document designed to provoke the moral outrage of its readers. The novel does little to seriously examine the conditions of Lake Nyasa, but instead projects an emotive image of disorder and instability. In situating the lake as a hub of the slave trade in a ‘hateful land’ of ‘perpetual warfare’, Baker provides a narrative map designed to incite and legitimate European intervention (*Cast*, pp. 277, 203).

Stanley’s literary geography is similar, but he develops a more detailed cartography of violence in *My Kalulu*. As he indicates in his preface, the novel is located in regions through which he travelled during his expedition in search of Livingstone in 1871–72. Selim and his party

---

76. Tim Jeal, *Livingstone*, rev. edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 124.

begin their journey at Bagamoyo, a port and trading town through which caravans journeying between Zanzibar and east Africa regularly passed on their departure and return.<sup>77</sup> From there, they set out for Lake Tanganyika with the aim of reaching Rua, west of the lake. As with Baker, the journey from the coast progressively takes them into unstable regions. It is notable, however, that violence begins to escalate in the novel after the caravan reaches Simbamwenni. During the Livingstone expedition, Stanley had been impressed by the country between Morogoro and Simbamwenni, which he thought had prospect for commercial development; it was, he wrote in *How I Found Livingstone*, inviting terrain for a ‘civilized nation’ that might ‘take possession of it’ and capitalise on the ‘wealth and prosperity it offers’. Simbamwenni itself, however, he described as a ‘nucleus of the slave-trade in East Africa’.<sup>78</sup> In *My Kalulu*, the town thus functions as a point of transition from relative security into more troubled territories beyond. At Simbamwenni, the caravan is compelled to make a choice between prospective onward routes, neither of which are without threat. They choose the southern road – the riskier path – which will lead them through the Wahehe, the Warori, and the Watuta, all of ‘whom we shall be obliged to pacify or make war against’ (*Kalulu*, p. 54). From this point, hostilities rapidly escalate; the caravan makes it as far as Kwikuru (near Tabora), before they are summarily defeated and Selim is taken into slavery. As a captive of the Watuta warlord Ferodia, he is transported south-west further into regions of perpetual volatility. Ututa, where Kalulu is prince, offers temporary stability but it is soon divided in a succession war when Ferodia seizes command from Kalulu on the death of his uncle, Katalambula. As in Baker, inter-tribal dissension is the status quo; Ferodia has ‘conquered the Wabona, the Wumarungu, the Wakonongo, the Wanyamwezi, the Wasowa, the Wakawendi, and

---

77. Sappho Charney, ‘Bagamoyo (Pwani, Tanzania)’, in *International Dictionary of Historic Places: Middle East and Africa*, ed. by K. A. Berney, Trudy Ring, and Noelle Watson (Chicago, IL and London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1996), pp. 111–15 (p.111).

78. Newman, *Imperial Footprints*, p. 80; Henry M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone: Travels, Adventures and Discoveries in Central Africa* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1872), pp. 122–23, 244.



the Warimba' and is easily able to stir up enough discontent to provoke revolt (p. 275). When Selim, Kalulu and the others flee northwards, moreover, they don't escape unstable regions but rather stay within their borders. The encounters with the slave trade that punctuate their journey to Ujiji and Unyanyembe – where they eventually find reprieve – ensure that much of the terrain east of Lake Tanganyika is drawn into *My Kalulu's* cartography of violence.

At the time when both Stanley and Baker were writing, violence was certainly a reality in east and central Africa. Richard Reid argues that contemporary socio-economic developments had transformative effects on regional conflict. The expansion of commercial networks between the 1830s and 1880s, and particularly the escalation of the ivory and slave trade 'driven by the rejuvenated Sultanate of Zanzibar', led to 'new patterns of militarization'. As competition for 'access to global trade networks' heightened, armed collisions escalated and became increasingly professionalized. Migrations from the south, as a result of the *Mfecane*, not only introduced new groups into the region but also new strategies and forms of military organization.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, the second half of the nineteenth century was notable for the development of communities with highly militarized identities and politically ambitious leaderships. The long nineteenth century was ultimately a period of marked socio-economic and military transformation, but for the most part the European understanding of the situation was limited. As Reid comments, contemporary observers may have perceived the violence of eastern Africa, but they generally misapprehended it and instead relied on deeply 'racialized interpretations of African war'.<sup>80</sup> This is certainly the case in *Cast up by the Sea* and *My Kalulu*, in which Baker and Stanley both promote an essentialized explanation of violence. Their narrative cartographies naturalize a vision of east Africa in which conflict and insecurity are its intrinsic features. Baker's and Stanley's novels are designed to advertise the need for imperial intervention and to appeal for action. In mapping

---

79. Richard J. Reid, *Warfare in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 115, 112, 122.

80. Reid, *Warfare*, pp. 119, xi.

their terrain as fundamentally disordered, they provide a case for the stabilizing influence of European governance.

The cartographic imagination is also operative in Cameron's *Jack Hooper*. The novel's representation of space is again resolutely political, although it engages with a quite different context. Cameron's protagonists begin in Cape Town and eventually journey across the Orange River. Although it is never explicitly stated, in going across the Orange River into the 'Bechuana country', their trajectory takes them beyond the border of the Cape Colony into territory that was – at the time the novel is set – outside formal British control. While written in the mid-1880s, *Jack Hooper* dips back into the recent past, offering a 'sketch of times' that are 'in point of years but yesterday' (*Jack*, p. viii). The novel does not precisely state its date, but it takes place in the aftermath of the Great Trek of the 1830s and 40s. A reference to those Boers who had 'lately settled' north of the Vaal suggests a setting later than 1838 (p. 238), a year that marks a period in which several trans-Vaal settlements began to develop.<sup>81</sup> In the absence of references to the South African Republic and the Orange Free State, moreover, we can also infer that the novel's events occur before the recognition of these independent Republics in 1852 and 1854 respectively. In taking its protagonists to the outskirts of what Norman Etherington calls 'the British Zone', progressively towards areas recently occupied by trekker communities, the novel enters disputed territory during a period of Anglo-Boer tension.<sup>82</sup> For the British, who sought to maintain their interests in central southern Africa, not least in Bechuanaland, the Boer-settled regions beyond the Cape frontiers were a major source of concern; as John Laband argues, from

---

81. John Laband, *The Transvaal Rebellion: The First Boer War 1880–1881* [2005] (Oxford and New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), p. 13.

82. Norman Etherington, *The Great Treks: The Transformation of Southern Africa 1815–1854* [2001] (Oxford and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), p. 5.

a British perspective the Great Trek ‘threatened to create instability and warfare in the interior with likely repercussions on the Cape’.<sup>83</sup>

In *Jack Hooper*, the expedition beyond the Cape frontier and across the Orange River is framed as a journey into disorder. In contrast to Stanley and Baker, in Cameron’s literary geography the primary threat isn’t African but rather Afrikaner. The Boers whom the party encounter prior to the Orange River, like the Steindrup family, are for the most part presented as worthy settlers living ‘in a patriarchal manner’ (*Jack*, p. 65). But outside Cape territory, they assume a quite different character. North of the river, Jack and his companions learn ‘that a Boer commando was out harrying the country and carrying desolation far and wide’ (p. 236); stealing cattle and taking ‘children as slaves’, they are engaged in the ‘indiscriminate plunder and slaughter’ of the Bechuana and Griqua (p. 242). The commando, moreover, consists of those who have retreated farthest from British authority, settling beyond the river Vaal. ‘Those Boers who have crossed the Vaal’, says Penton, ‘are mostly a set of ruffians’ and have been joined by ‘adventurers of all kinds, escaped criminals and what not’ (p. 238). In the conflict that ensues, the Boers are represented as consistently dishonourable, resorting to cowardly ‘surprises’, ‘treachery’ and underhand tactics (pp. 246, 278). Indeed, in the territory beyond British authority there is not only disorder but pervasive moral degeneration. As Captain Smithson puts it at the end of the novel: ‘decent Dutch Africans ... are few and far between, and the remainder are rapidly going back in civilization, and becoming more brutalized from day to day’ (p. 326).

The image of degeneration is compounded by the behavioural decline of the expedition’s Afrikaner guide, which occurs over the course of the party’s geographical movement. Beginning as a capable if sullen manager, Jan becomes progressively ungovernable as they travel farther from the Cape. In the early part of their journey, there are signals of future trouble; by refusing to hunt in close proximity to dangerous animals, for instance, Jan is found wanting according to

---

83. Laband, *Transvaal Rebellion*, p. 12.

the novel's barometer of moral character and masculinity. But as they near the Orange River, significant problems begin to surface. Soon, he has an encounter with Mr Penton for refusing to perform 'his work cheerfully', and subsequently reveals 'a sulky and unobliging temper' (*Jack*, p. 208). Not long afterwards, he begins to actively plot the party's demise, trying to convince the retinue to 'promise that after we had crossed the Orange River they would aid him in persuading Mr. Penton to turn to the eastward and march to the north of the Vaal River'. There they would meet a settlement of Boers, where 'the wagons and their contents could be easily appropriated' (p. 216). While given the opportunity to reform, Jan's conduct reaches a crisis point and soon after crossing the river Penton is obliged to restrain and discharge him, following which he joins the Boer commando. Jan's progressive decline throughout the journey from the Cape serves to denigrate the Boers territorially and politically beyond British governance. In casting the expedition as a tour into progressively disordered space where Afrikaners are unchecked, *Jack Hooper* acts as a 'moral geography' of southern Africa in which character is mapped onto place in the service of political agenda.<sup>84</sup>

Cameron's novel was published in 1886, just after the formation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The region had been firmly in the public eye, not least through the efforts of John Mackenzie, an agent of the London Missionary Society who had pressed 'the issue of Boers and

---

84. Broadly speaking, 'moral geography' refers to 'the interrelationship of moral and geographical arguments'. See David Matless, 'Moral Geographies', in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 5th edn, ed. by Derek Gregory, Ron Johnston, Geraldine Pratt, Michael J. Watts and Sarah Whatmore (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 478–79 (p. 478). Under this umbrella, there have been widely varied investigations of the connections between ethics, place and power. In this article, I use 'moral geography' to signal the way 'narratives assign meaning to places and to relationships among places and peoples'. See Christa J. Olson, "'Raices Americanas': Indigenist Art, América, and Arguments for Ecuadorian Nationalism', in *Regional Rhetorics: Real and Imagined Spaces*, ed. by Jenny Rice (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), pp. 33–50 (p. 38).

Bechuana on British public opinion in the early 1880s' and lobbied hard for 'British protection'.<sup>85</sup> In these circumstances, *Jack Hooper's* return to the recent past and denunciation of Afrikaner activities in the region provides retrospective justification for the Protectorate. Indeed, Cameron extends a negative image of the Boers, as violent slave-traders preying on the Bechuana, that owes much to David Livingstone's writings in the 1850s.<sup>86</sup> The novel's publication in the interim between the two Anglo-Boer wars is also of significance. When Cameron was writing, tensions between Britain and the Boer Republics were far from settled. The First Boer War (1880–81) had of course been a humiliating experience for the British, who were defeated in the conflict's four major confrontations.<sup>87</sup> And with the economic development and expansion of the Transvaal, following the discovery of the region's mineral wealth, British dominance in southern Africa increasingly seemed to be under threat and its imperial legitimacy in question.<sup>88</sup> Cameron's novel thus brings the past to bear on the politics of the present. By revisiting accusations of Afrikaner activities north of the Orange, dating from Livingstone, *Jack Hooper* was doubtless designed to fuel antipathy to the Boer Republics and their increasing ascendancy in regions of British interest.

More generally, the novel functions as an appeal for further imperial activity. Like other authors of popular imperial fiction, such as Henty and Ballantyne, Cameron uses the novel's preface to underscore his political intent; a preface could provide a didactic narrative frame and

---

85. Neil Parsons, *King Khama, Emperor Joe, and the Great White Queen: Victorian Britain through African Eyes* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 32.

86. Parsons, *King Khama*, p. 31.

87. Harold E. Raugh, *The Victorians at War, 1815–1914: An Encyclopedia of British Military History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), p. 49.

88. Peter Henshaw, 'The Origins of the Boer War: The Periphery, the Centre and the "Man on the Spot"', in *The International Impact of the Boer War* [2001], ed. by Keith Wilson (Oxford and New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), pp. 8–24 (p. 8)

an opportunity to render moral and political messages explicit.<sup>89</sup> Indeed, Cameron begins by arguing that ‘Our possessions in South Africa are destined to play a great part in the future regeneration and civilization of the whole continent’. He was anxious, however, that the British were ‘allowing foreign nations to benefit’ and that the public did ‘not realize how important to us as a commercial nation is the future of Africa’ (*Jack*, p. vii). As James Casada argues, Cameron was an ‘outspoken advocate of British advance’. He promoted what he called ‘commercial geography’, involving himself in a number of schemes to investigate raw materials and potential markets.<sup>90</sup> By the mid-1880s Cameron was disappointed by British apathy and particularly by the failure of his ‘British Commercial Geographical Society’ to attract significant interest, but he nevertheless persisted in championing ‘legitimate commerce’ and ‘a formal British presence in Africa’.<sup>91</sup> In the context of his frustrated aspirations, Cameron’s turn to fiction provided a new means of imperial advocacy by which he might effectively contest public indifference. Certainly, in *Jack Hooper* he hopes that informing his readers about the Empire’s ‘vast dependencies’ would encourage them to embrace ‘the duties and responsibilities of that glorious heritage’ (p. viii). As I have shown, the novel’s spatial imaginary was intimately bound up with this purpose, providing a map of southern African terrain designed to engage readers with concerns about Afrikaner independence and British interests in Bechuanaland. The fiction of exploration was a politically embedded literary genre; the explorer-novelists, or at least the sample examined here, wrote narrative geographies in which place and politics intersected on behalf of an imperial vision.

#### IV. Conclusion

---

89. For instance, see G. A. Henty’s *With Clive in India* (London: Blackie, 1884) and *St. George for England* (London: Blackie, 1885).

90. Casada, ‘Verney Lovett Cameron’, pp. 212, 210.

91. Casada, ‘Verney Lovett Cameron’, p. 213.

This article has offered a sketch of what I call the fiction of exploration, a body of literature that flourished in the late nineteenth century but which has remained largely ignored until now. The fact that scientific explorers engaged in such writing practices is revelatory of the contemporary nature of geography. The condition of possibility for the explorer-turned-novelist lay in a field in which – as Driver puts it – a ‘neat distinction between the discourses of adventurous travel and scientific exploration’ did not hold fast. The boundary between adventure and scientific travel was ‘unsettled’ and remained the source of debate.<sup>92</sup> And yet, as Max Jones argues, it was in the closing decades of the nineteenth century that geography increasingly emerged as a professional and ‘scientific’ discipline. During this period, the Royal Geographical Society consistently made reforms designed to promote ‘the accurate measurement of the world as the central aim of exploration’. Laying new emphasis on the importance of rigorous training in surveying, and publishing more systematic guidelines for prospective explorers, the society sought to delineate its scientific remit more definitively between 1870 and 1900.<sup>93</sup> It was perhaps as a result of such reforms within geography that explorer-fiction largely disappears with the arrival of the twentieth century.<sup>94</sup> As the parameters of exploration became more tightly defined, and as geography became increasingly professionalized and achieved status as a university subject, fiction lost its traction with those engaged in the work of scientific travel.

In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, however, the explorer-novel was undoubtedly a notable feature of the literary culture of exploration and fulfilled a number of functions. As seen in the three case studies here, popular fiction provided a means to reach new

---

92. Driver, *Geography Militant*, p. 2.

93. Max Jones, ‘Measuring the World: Exploration, Empire and the Reform of the Royal Geographical Society, c. 1874–93’, in *The Organisation of Knowledge in Victorian Britain*, ed. by Martin Daunt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 313–36 (pp. 314, 318–30).

94. Harry H. Johnston’s *The Man who Did the Right Thing: A Romance of East Africa* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1921), is a notable exception.

audiences who might not have been attracted to larger expeditionary narratives. While one might assume that boys were the primary targets of these novels, they took advantage of the porous boundaries between juvenile and adult readerships in order to obtain a wider popular audience. The turn to fiction, I suggest, should be understood within the period's developing celebrity culture. As explorers achieved celebrity status, facilitated by significant press coverage and by the interest groups that promoted them, they were quick to seize on novels as a means to extend their public stature. Archival records, moreover, indicate that publishers encouraged their fictional efforts with strategic considerations in mind. Since the explorer-authors each made major contributions to geographical knowledge, their novels also mark an unusual and important contribution to adventure writing. They acquired a distinctive status as both adventure story and credible witness, thanks to their authors' travels in Africa; their reception was intimately connected to the explorers' lived experience in the field. More generally, they may have helped to consolidate the perceived connection between adventure writing and the expeditionary narrative, which gave the genre its surprising degree of credibility and authority.

Crucially, the explorer novel should be read as a means of engagement with exploration itself. At the most basic level it served to disseminate information about exploration, performing a role akin to an expedition primer. Yet these novels were no transparent documents that simply mediated information, but rather ones engaged both in reflexive commentary and in mythmaking. In their fiction, explorers revisited the experience of African travel, offering percipient perspectives on expeditionary transit while also engaging in considerable distortion. The fiction of exploration, moreover, was a political literature. While it is too easy to assume an unproblematic link between exploration and later imperial developments, or to reduce it to expansionist objectives, many explorers of east and central Africa did make the case for European involvement, whether by promising commercial opportunities or by appealing to the humanitarian duty to establish ordered governance. Baker, Stanley and Cameron were all advocates of imperialism and used their fiction to provoke interest in sub-Saharan Africa and to



provide legitimizing contexts for intervention. The novels worked to this end, I argue, by acting as narrative maps that invested geography with meaning. In Cameron's moral geography of southern Africa, and in Stanley's and Baker's east African cartographies of violence, home readers encountered geographical visions that were imbricated with political design.

### **Acknowledgements**

This work was funded by a grant from the Royal Society of Edinburgh, which supported visits to consult archival material in various institutions. I thank the British library for permission to quote the Macmillan letter books, and the Royal Museum for Central Africa for permitting me to cite the correspondence between Stanley and Marston. I am grateful to Mathilde Leduc-Grimaldi, curator of the Stanley Archive, for her advice while undertaking research in the collection. Thanks also to the anonymous readers for the *Journal of Victorian Culture*, for their comments and thoughtful engagement with this article.

Justin Livingstone

*Queen's University Belfast*

*j.livingstone@qub.ac.uk*